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LETTER DATED 19 MARCH 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 19 March 1996 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the violations committed by the U-2 aircraft.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 19 March 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

We wish to refer to our letters, of which the most recent is the letter dated 11 January 1996 (document S/1996/26) addressed to the President of the Security Council, concerning the violation of Iraqi airspace by the United States U-2 spy plane on the pretext of conducting an aerial survey for the Special Commission.

We should like to inform you that this aircraft, which always takes off from Saudi Arabian territory, has continued its violations and breaches of Iraqi airspace, infringing thereby our country's sovereignty and security. As of the end of February 1996 it had made 287 overflights, for a total flight time of 1,302 hours, since it began such operations in August 1991.

In my previous letters, I deduced a certain amount of logical evidence that has become apparent since the use of this aircraft started, clearly indicating that its repeated utilization is designed only to serve the policy of the State to which the aircraft belongs. I would mention in this connection the explicit admission by the United States Defense Secretary, Mr. William Perry, who on 6 February 1996 stated in an address to the Institute for Near East Political Studies in Washington that his country was indeed involved in operations designed to expose my country to dangers and plots with a view to changing its political regime. We may assert that among the important means employed by the United States of America with a view to attaining the objective referred to by Secretary of Defense Perry are the overflights by the U-2 aircraft and the military information it compiles on my country. Consequently, it is incumbent upon the United Nations to re-examine the issue of continued forcible use of this aircraft by the United States of America to violate Iraq's airspace in a manner totally incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as they relate to respect for the sovereignty of all Member States. We condemn these unjustified violations of our airspace and demand that an end be put to these illegal operations. Iraq reserves the right to demand redress for the material and psychological damage caused by the violations of its airspace by this aircraft.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate the request, made in our 106 letters on this subject to the Secretary-General to date, that Iraqi aircraft should be used instead of foreign aircraft in the work of the Special Commission in order to exclude any possibility of such foreign aircraft being used for purposes prejudicial to Iraq's sovereignty and security.

I request that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq